Telephone Building 320 St. Paul Place Private 1941; add. 1949

Summary

The Telephone Building is an excellent example of the Modernistic or Art Deco skyscraper style in Baltimore. The architects, Taylor and Fisher, were the co-designers of the Baltimore Trust Building (Maryland National Bank), regarded as the best example of the style in the city. The Telephone Building was awarded recognition for its design in 1943 by the Association of Commerce.

Survey No. B-2231

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No. 0422315811

DOE __yes x no

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7. Description

Survey No. B-2231

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent good fair	deteriorated ruins unexposed	unaltered _x_ altered	moved date of move

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Summary

The Telephone Building is a 14-story brick and steel structure with Indiana limestone facing built in two stages in 1941 and 1949 in the Modernistic or Art Deco style and located on the southwest corner of St. Paul Place and East Pleasant Street in central Baltimore, Maryland. The building has three-part facades on its principal elevations on St. Paul Place and Pleasant Street. Two-story bases are topped by 14-bay intermediate units on the 3rd through the 10th stories. Corner bays are set back at the 9th story and the central bays are set back above the 10th floor. A large communications tower stands on the flat roof.

General Description

The main elevation on St. Paul Place has 6 large bays flanking the central entrance bay and small bays at the outer corners of the facade. The entrance is recessed and has a revolving door below a stainless steel marquee. Above the door is a window with horizontal muntins, flanked by geometric metal grilles. The name "Telephone Building" is incised in the limestone facing above the entrance bay. The window bays flanking the entrance have geometric-design cross bars dividing the first floor windows and black granite panels incised with a shallow relief design between the first and second floors. Above the second floor a wide limestone spandrel separates the base from the central portion of the facade.

The center portion of the facade is given a vertical emphasis by the separation of the 14 main bays by limestone-faced spandrels. Between each floor are panels of black granite. The corner bays are set off by larger areas of limestone and by the stops at the 10th floor. The center bays continue through the 12th floor and then set back for the remaining two stories. The corners of the central mass are rounded and the 14th floor has carved panels of geometric designs in each bay in place of windows. In the 1960's, a large radio communications tower was added to the flat roof. The windows above the second story are 3/3 steel sash.

When the C & P company built its new building immediately west of the Telephone Building in 1971, the two buildings were linked by an enclosed garage at the ground floor.

(continuation)

Areas of Significance—Check and justify below prehistoric __ archeology-prehistoric ___ community planning landscape architecture ____ 1400-1499 _ archeology-historic conservation law science 1500-1599 agriculture literature economics sculpture 1600-1699 x architecture education military social/ 1700-1799 art engineering music humanitarian 1800-1899 commerce exploration/settlement _ _ philosophy theater transportation _x_ 1900-_ communications industry politics/government invention _ other (specify) Specific dates 1900-41 Addition 1949 Builder/Architect Taylor and Fisher, architects B x C Applicable Criteria: A and/or Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Survey No.

B-2231

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Level of Significance: national state x local

Summary

8. Significance

The Telephone Building is an excellent example of the Modernistic or Art Deco skyscraper style in Baltimore. The architects, Taylor and Fisher, were the co-designers of the Baltimore Trust Building (Maryland National Bank), regarded as the best example of the style in the city. The Telephone Building was awarded recognition for its design in 1943 by the Association of Commerce.

History and Support

Warner and Hanna's Map of Baltimore (1801) shows the St. Paul-Pleasant Street area prior to the laying out of the street grid pattern. The course of East Pleasant Street lies along a ravine dropping sharply to the east from the high ground along which Charles Street was extended. This incline is still a characteristic of East Pleasant Street. By 1823, Poppleton's map showed "Great Pleasant Street" and St. Paul Street with a solid row of buildings facing east on St. Paul. A smaller row of structures, probably stables, bordered Lovegrove Alley which bisected the block on a north-south axis. Poppleton's map of 1851 indicated the frontage on the south side of Pleasant Street was filled in by structures, linking the row on St. Paul with the stable row. On the 1896 map, the site of the Telephone Building was divided into 4 lots facing Pleasant Street and each had a structure on it. This may have been the actual plan of the area from the first construction on the site, but was not articulated on the earlier maps.

The north and south sides of E. Pleasant between Lovegrove Alley and St. Paul Street were formerly occupied by elegant brick rowhouses in the Greek Revival style, with finely detailed doorways, window trim and interior ornamentation. The house at 15 E. Pleasant was particularly noteworthy, being on a busy street corner. It had a stepped gable and blind-arched windows on its St. Paul Street elevation.

(continuation)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-2231

Maryland 21201

state

Baltimore Sun: Dec. 12, 1898; May 24 & 25, 1923; Sept. 17, 1935; Nov. 2, 1939.

Baltimore Museum of Art: Laurence Hall Fowler photograph collection, artifacts of E. Pleasant Street houses. (continued)

10. Geographical Data

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organization Comm. fo	or Hist. & Arch. Pres.	date	1984		
street & number 606 To	wer Suites, 118 N. Ho	oward St. telepho	ne 396-4866	15	

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Baltimore

city or town

Maryland Historical Trust

Shaw House

21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 269-2438

7. Description, continued General Description Page 2

The C & P Company retains a complete set of architectural drawings of the Telephone Building at its present administrative headquarters at 1 E. Pratt Street.

8. Significance, continued History and Support Page 2

A long rear wing with an open gallery was visible above a high brick or stone wall. According to an 1898 <u>Baltimore Sun</u> article, this was the residence after 1853 of Henry Winter Davis, a noted orator and statesman. During the 1920's, it was a favorite subject of photographers and artists. (See Fig. 1 attached.) According to Laurence H. Fowler, an architect in the early 20th century who photographed much of the Charles Street district, No. 11 E. Pleasant was the birthplace of another architect of the period, J. Appleton Wilson. In the 1920's, this house was occupied by the offices of several architects: Riggin Buckler, Howard Sill, and J.C. Lafferty. In the early 1920's, the League of Women Voters had an office at No. 9 Pleasant.

A <u>Sun</u> article dated May 24, 1923 stated that a \$2,000,000 office building was planned for the southwest corner of St. Paul and Pleasant Streets. The four lots and their extant buildings were purchased from the Davis Coal and Coke Company by an unnamed buyer. The buyer was the C & P Telephone Company, which the article stated planned an 8 to 10 story building. The next day, May 25, a second article identified C & P as the buyer and gave further information on the plans. Preliminary drawings were in process by Stern and Tomlinson of Washington and the building was to be 20 stories high with offices and the Plaza exchange equipment. Construction work was to be done by the Weller Construction Company of Washington and was to begin in the spring of 1924.

For unknown reasons, this plan was never accomplished, but the demolition of the existing structures on the site apparently took place in the early 1930's. Parts of the houses were salvaged, probably through the instigation of Laurence Fowler who was on the Board of the Baltimore Museum of Art. Among the features saved were the entrance surrounds of No. 15, the wrought iron window grilles and interior trim of No. 11 1/2, the exterior door of No. 9, and the entrance and an interior hallway arch of No. 11. Eventually, parts of all the materials were consolidated in a reconstructed doorway and and fanlight in the Decorative Arts wing of the Museum.

C & P's plans for the Telephone Building were publicized in late 1939. A two-phase construction plan called for a initial 6-story structure to be completed in the summer of 1941 with an additional 6 stories scheduled for a later date. The architects were Robert E. Lee Taylor (1882-1952) and David Kirkpatrick Este Fisher, Jr. (b. 1892). Fisher had received his architectural degree from MIT in 1916. He worked in the office of Kenneth M. Murchison in New York from 1916 to 1917. In Baltimore, Fisher worked for Parker, Thomas, and Rice from 1919 to 1926, becoming a partner in 1924. In 1927, he left the firm and formed a partnership with R. E. L. Taylor. Among their other works in Baltimore are the addition to the Federal Reserve Branch Bank in 1955, the addition to the Federal Land Bank, and, with Smith and May as associates, the Baltimore Trust Company Building (Maryland National Bank). The Baltimore Trust Building is acknowledged as the best example of the Art Deco skyscraper style in Baltimore. Telephone Building, designed 10 years after this building in a more

8. Significance, continued History and Support Page 3

streamlined version of the Art Deco, may be ranked with the best work of the firm. In 1943, the Association of Commerce gave one of 11 awards for architectural excellence to the Telephone Building.

The first phase of the project was completed in February 1941 (See Fig. 2). Delayed by World War II, the second section of 8 floors was completed in July 1949. The carved parapet panels on the original 6-story structure were reused on the 14th floor of the addition. Additional equipment for three other exchanges (Lexington, Mulberry, and Saratoga) was installed, serving over 70,000 telephones. Primarily designed for equipment, the business offices occupied only a small portion of the building. In 1956, in cooperation with the Baltimore chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a Home Planning Center was established in the Telephone Building, providing displays of 5 landscaped model homes, several full-scale rooms, a reference library, and advisors on architectural design, financing, furnishing, and wiring. The designs were the winners of a competition sponsored by C & P and the AIA. After the opening of the new C & P Building at Charles and Pleasant Streets, the public offices were transferred to the first floor of the new building. After several years, the former public offices in the Telephone Building were remodeled in a Post-Modern style and reopened as the principal public business office.

C & P Telephone Company of Maryland, Public Relations Offices files.

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Department vertical files: C & P Company of Maryland, Architecture - Awards.

Peale Museum Architects, Drawing of 15 E. Pleasant Street.

BALTIMORE METROCENTER SURVEY

AREA: Cathedral Hill

SURVEY NO.: B-2231

MAGI NO.: 0422315811

Address: 320 St. Paul Place

Current Name: C & P St. Paul Place Bldg.

Block: 603 Height: 14 Lot: 14

Lot size: 181'6"x188'6"x158'6" Materials: Limestone & Granite

Condition: Excellent Use: Commercial

Owner: C&P Telephone Co. of Md. Accessible: Yes, unrestricted

Designation:

Liber/Folio: RHB 2404/596

Historic Name: Telephone Building

Date: 1941, addition 1949

Architect/Builder: Taylor & Fisher, arch.

Style (if appropriate) ! Modernistic or Art Deco

Description:

The building's principal facade on St. Paul Place has a two-story base with window units extending the full two stories. Six bays flank the center entrance which has a revolving door under a stainless steel marquee. Above the marquee is a large window with flanking stainless steel decorative grilles. Black granite panels with a shallow incised scroll design separate the first and second floors. The piers separating the bays are faced with limestone and terminate in a wide horizontal spandrel above the second floor. Floors 3 through 10 are divided into 14 vertical bays by limestone spandrels. Plain black granite panels separate each floor. Two corner bays are set off from the central bays and end at the 9th floor level. The central bays are set back at the 11th floor. The 14th floor has carved stone panels in each bay in place of the windows. Other windows are 3/3 steel sash.

Significance:

Area: Architecture

Level: Local

The Telephone Building is an excellent example of the Modernistic or Art Deco skyscraper style in Baltimore. The architects, Taylor and Fisher were the co-designers of the Baltimore Trust Building (Maryland National Bank), regarded as the best example of the style in the city. The Telephone Building was awarded recognition for its design in 1943 by the Association of Commerce.

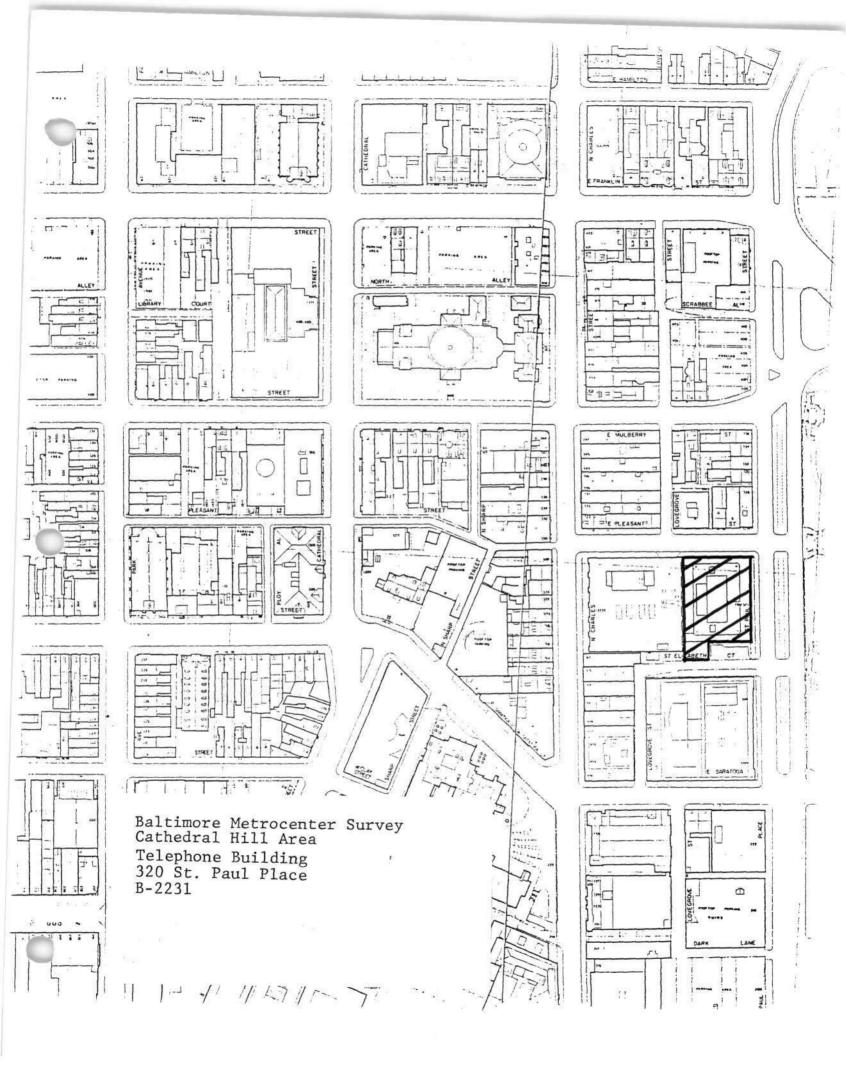
(See Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form)

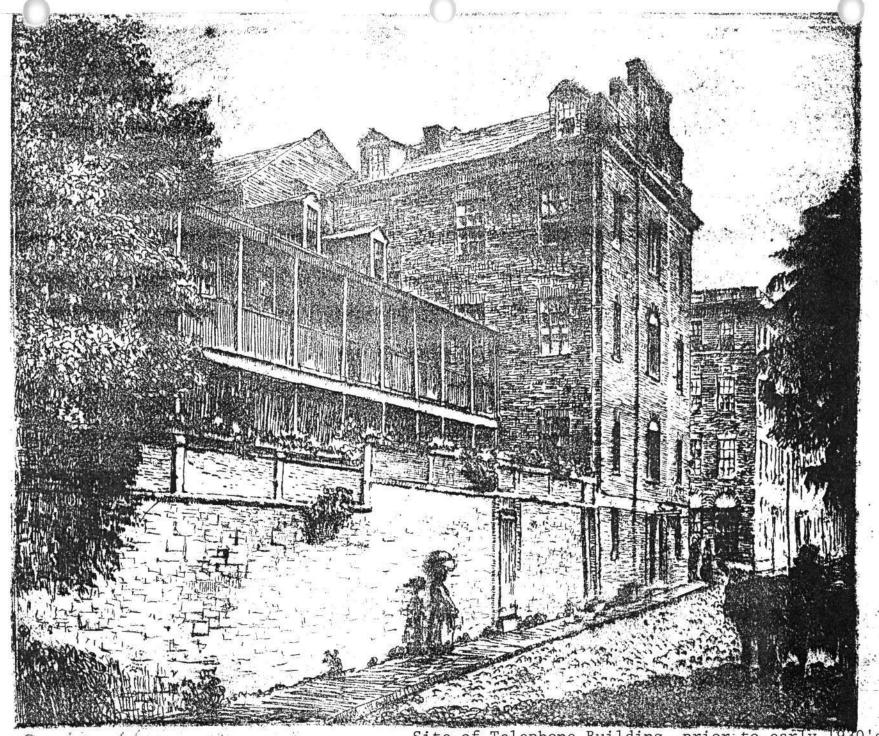
C & P Co. files; EP Md. Dept. vert. files; BS: 12-12-1898, 5-24 & 25-23,

Sources: 9-17-35, 11-2-39.

Surveyor and Date: Janet Davis, November 1984







Site of Telephone Building, prior to early 1930's B-2231 Peale Museum

H 363



Telephone Building B-2231 Ca. 1945 Original photo at C&P Hqs., Public Relations



Telephone Building B-2231
320 St. Paul Place
Cathedral Hill - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
Date: August 1984
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
General view from east
1/2



Telephone Building B-2231
320 St. Paul Place
Cathedral Hill - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
Date: August 1984
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Main entrance detail
2/2

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

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_STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDEN
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CONDITION

LEXCELLENT __DETERIORATED __GOOD __RUINS __UNEXPOSED

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CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building was designed by Taylor and Fisher, the firm that designed the Maryland National Bank and U.S. Appraisers' Stores buildings. By 1944 the first six stories of the building were completed. The upper stories were built after World War II. The building was the last skyscraper begun in the city before World War II. With its staggered massing in the upper stories, the building is typical of the New York style of the 1940's. On St. Paul Place the first two story facades are nine bays wide, the next ten story facades are sixteen bays wide, and the thirteenth story facade is fourteen bays wide. The building is massing and fenestration are symmetrical. The nine bays in both the first and second story facades on St. Paul Place are defined by two story high window units and a recessed two story high entrance. The two end window units incorporate three flat plate glass panes of roughly the same size and a rectangular panel of granite incised with a shallow carving. The granite panel is approximately the same size as the plate glass panels. The two lower plate glass panels are horizontally separated by a decorative metal spandrel. These two stacked plate glass panels are surmounted by the granite panel which, in turn, is surroumted by the third plate glass panel. The window unit is encased in a metal frame. The other six window units, three to either side of the entrance, are tripartite in their horizontal arrangement and are organized vertically like the end windows. The center section of this window unit is wider than the flanking sections. The entrance is slightly recessed and flat. Two flat doors, one to either side of a revolving door, surmount a stone stoop. A metal spandrel separates the doors from the large window surmounting them. Horizontally the window is divided into three sections, and vertically the window is divided into six sections. This organization makes for a column of six flat plate glass lights above each of the three doors, Either outer column is decorated with a metal screen of a geometric "deco" design. Avove the entrance the building facade is incised with the building name "Telephone Building".

Except for the outer bays of the third through fourteenth story facades on the three visible sides of the building, the window columns that define the bays above the second story facade are organized into a pattern of alternating flat, three over three window and flat granite panel. The outer bays display a similar organization and house identical windows as the other columns however, they do not carry the granite panels. All of the columns are housed in shallow recessions. The central fourteen columns are capped with a recessed panel of carved stone decoration, also in the "deco" style and reflective of the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. The roof is flat, and a communications tower projects from it.

The upper seven story facades facing south follow the same pattern of fenestration that articulates the upper seven story facades facing St. Paul Place. The thirteenth story facade is eight bays wide and the seventh through twelfth story facades are ten bays wide. To the left a six stories high, two bay wide unfenestrated utility block projects two bays from the main building. To the right, the fitst two story facades are punctuated by two stories

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

SPECIFIC DAT	ES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT		
<i>¥</i> 1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	_INDUSTRY _INVENTION	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	_THEATER
_1600-1699	LARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
_1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
_1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	_LAW	SCIENCE
PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE O	N SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY		
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VERBAL BOUNI	DARY DESCRIPTION	0-1 d. 1 1 1	
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LIST ALL S	STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERI	APPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES	
STATE	COUNTY	Y	0
STATE	COUNTY	Y	
11 FORM PRE	EPARED BY Frank Knox, Planning Assistant		
ORGANIZATION	COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &	DATE 1976	
STREET & NUMBER	ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION Room 900	TELEPHONE	
CITY OR TOWN	26 South Calvert St. Baltimore Md 21202	STATE	

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust

The Shaw House, 21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

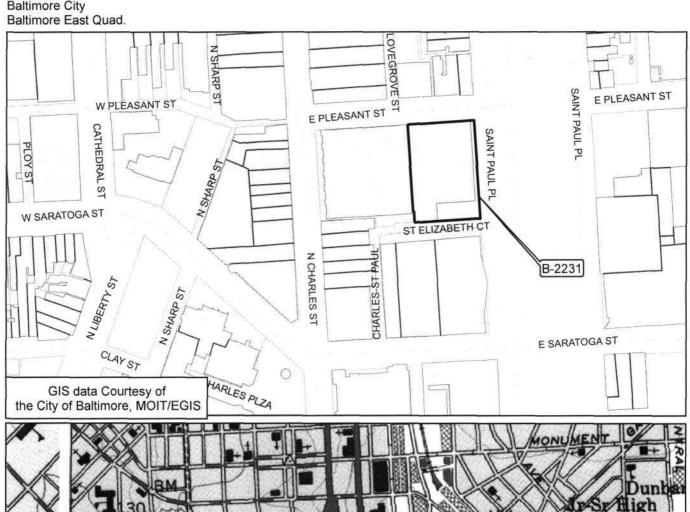
(301) 267-1438

high window units. Of the four units the one closest to the utility block shares the lower part of its aperture with a one story high metal garage door and loading platform. The other units are identical to those that punctuate the St. Paul Place facade. That is, the end window has three lights, and the others are tripartite.

The Pleasant Street facade is six bays wide at the first and second story facades. The third through twelfth story facades are ten bays wide, and the thirteenth story facade is eight bays wide. The third through thirteenth story facades follow the same pattern of organization as the third through thirteenth story facades facing St. Paul Place. The two story high window units punctuating the first and second story facades show only minor variation from those punctuating the St. Paul Place facade. There are four tripartite windows between two end windows. The window at the Charles Street end of the facade is alflat single light plate glass window in an aluminum frame. The window at the St. Paul Place end of the facade is similar to those end windows facing St. Paul Place. The lower portions of these two story high windows carry lights of opaque black glass. In progression from St. Paul Place to Charles Street the granite foundation wall is laid in steps to accomodate the uphill slope of the site. Consequently the lower portions of the window units become shorter in the aforementioned progression in order to accomodate, the regularity of the building's design.

All the building walls are stone.

B-2231
Telephone Building (C&P Saint Paul Place Building)
320 Saint Paul Place
Block 0603, Lot 014
Baltimore City
Baltimore Fast Quad







BLK 603 516-20 St. Rul Pl.